

TIPS FOR ENGAGING WITH POLICYMAKERS



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The NYU Food Environment & Policy Research Coalition and the NYU Center for the Study of Asian American Health are excited to share tips for engaging with the policymaking process, specifically tailored for academic partners. These tips were discussed during a symposium on Engaging with Policymakers featuring Drs. Marie Bragg, Lan Đoàn, Roxanne Dupuis, and Kellie Owens.

Tips	Practical implications/examples
Connect with community-based organizations and advocacy groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community-based organizations and advocacy groups have their finger on the pulse of the policymaking process.• Attend their events and join their mailing lists to stay up to date and to learn about upcoming policy-relevant deadlines.• Connect with them directly to present your research and explore opportunities for collaboration to develop and promote policy-relevant research.• Each research field has different community-based organizations and advocacy groups.• Examples include: Center for Science in the Public Interest [food topics]; Fairplay [digital media topics]; etc.
Connect with policymakers and lawmakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify key individuals through online searches.• Cold email them.• Leverage your networks to facilitate connections.• Share your research in a digestible manner (e.g., executive summary of your research findings; infographics).• Know your “ask” before reaching out, but also be open to learning what their needs are. Do they have a research question or topic they need data on? A good “ask” is ‘how can researchers help you better understand or address issues related to [their topic of interest].’
Connect with interested parties who work on issues you care about	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find community advisory groups, accept local speaking opportunities, attend local events, and write op-eds and editorials.• Interested parties might include non-profit organizations, after-school programs, senior centers, etc.

Think creatively about engaging interested parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the individuals whose health is impacted by specific policies, or individuals or entities who may have to comply with policies. • Find common ground and tailor your framing for each interested party you engage with.
Build long-term relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and maintain long-term relationships with interested parties, policymakers, and their staff. • Regularly update them on your research and its implications.
Submit public comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide direct feedback on proposed policies. This is an opportunity to voice support (or lack thereof) for policies based on your research.
Offer expert testimony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer to provide expert testimony at legislative hearings or public meetings. This can position you as a go-to expert in your field and increase the impact of your research on policy decisions.
Put yourself out there	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a social media presence. • Share data-driven insights and be prepared to synthesize key issues. • Produce deliverables for the general public that are visually appealing. • Attend community events and meetings, which are attended by policymakers.
Use effective communication strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use clear, concise, and non-technical language when communicating with policymakers.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the work of others. • Participate in the creation of reports in the “gray” literature, like governmental or institutional reports. • Leverage existing networks and relationships. • Attend conferences to connect with government agencies, advocacy groups, and corporations doing work on your topic area.

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